

## HOW THE DOCTOR WGN

By Jeannette S. Benton

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The office boy heard the doctor in the annex and went out. Her face was buried in a basin of water, and the formaldehyde bottle stood open.

"How's the smallpox?" he asked. "Bad," she replied, emerging rosy from the towel. "Is any one waiting?"

"No one now but Mr. Doane Aldrich; been three or four, but they got tired waiting."

"Very well. Tell him I will be there in a minute."

As the boy closed the door she walked to the mirror and regarded herself attentively, spraying violet water over her hands and hair.

"I wish I had some powder," she murmured. "I am afraid I look blowzy."

To the tall young man in the reception room she looked discouragingly cool and unperturbed as he arose at her entrance.

"It is a little matter, doctor," he explained. "I have just been transferred to the Y mine, and they have smallpox down there, so I suppose it is necessary to be vaccinated."

"It certainly is, if you haven't been lately. Things are in bad shape at the Y. I have put in the whole afternoon there. There's a good deal of smallpox and more dissatisfaction. I suppose the dissatisfaction is what sent you there."

"I suppose so. What's at the bottom of the trouble anyway?"

"Sickening hospitals and the company store. If you can get the company to do anything before those people murder you as its nearest representative, you will be doing good work. However, come into the office, and I will vaccinate you."

He followed her in.

"This is the first time I ever came here as a subject," he remarked.

He bared his arm and looked dubiously at its white surface.

How could she be a doctor? Still, he had sometimes wished he could be sick a week or two. It would be such a good chance to see her every day. What was she going to do with that razor looking little knife? It had been so long since he was vaccinated he had forgotten all about it. Did she jab the stuff in at the end of that? If she was going to jab, he wished she would stop that scratching.

He watched the scratching knife, fascinated. Suddenly it began to describe erratic circles in his vision.

Dr. Richie felt his arm relaxing under her grasp. With a movement as quiet as it was quick she eased his stalwart body to the floor, then loosened his collar and dashed a little water in his face.

He opened his eyes slowly.

"Oh, I say," he gasped, "what's the matter?"

The doctor stood a little way off regarding him with professional gravity.

"I was vaccinating you, and you fainted," she explained. "You will be all right in a moment."

He got rather uncertainly to his feet and leaned against a convenient case of drawers.

"Good Lord!" he groaned. "What do you think of me? I hope you don't think it was because it hurt. I don't know what it was. I was watching that little knife; then I was here on the floor. Please finish the job," he concluded irritably. "I'll try to stand up under it."

As she adjusted the small bandage he thought savagely:

"If I should lift you off your feet, my sweet doctor, and kiss that diabolical dimple, you might at least respect my muscle. How can a fellow make love to a woman doctor anyway?" Aloud he said, "Thank you, doctor," rather abruptly, hurried into his coat, settled with the office boy and got away with all speed.

The doctor strolled to the window and watched him go striding off, his big shoulders squared.

"Poor old fellow!" she said softly.

Then she flushed and smiled in a way that little befitting member of the medical profession.

"He is bashful and stupid, too," she pouted.

Doane Aldrich squared his shoulders against his troubles often that winter. His recognized powers as a pacifier seemed to have signally failed.

One day he swung into the cart as the doctor was trotting home.

"See here," he said. "I must talk with you. I don't know what to do with those people. Heaven knows they have reason enough to be sore, and I am helpless. Of course they can't realize that, but the company pays no attention to my representations. I am the nearest thing the poor brutes have to hate, and they hate me well. Tomorrow I have got to discharge McGuire and Kearney!"

The doctor interrupted: "That means a strike, to begin with. Then Kate McGuire and Dilsey Kearney—why, they would as soon have a riot as enough to eat!"

"But what can I do? The men have come on the shift twice within a week drunk and quarreling. Overlook it and they will all get drunk and—"

"Raise hades," gently suggested the doctor. Then her face grew mischievous. "Don't you think you had better follow your predecessor's example and throw it up?" she suggested.

He looked at her with decided sternness.

"I supposed that was about the opinion you entertained of me. Excuse me. There is a man I want to see."

And Mr. Aldrich had checked the horse enough to depart.

It was cold, with a driving mist, when the doctor drove up to her gate several evenings later.

"Poor Bess!" she said to the panting horse. "Tired, aren't you?"

A small, tattered boy came down the road, running wearily, as though nearly spent.

"Oh, Miss Doctor," he shrilled, "Ifis face shone pale through the dirt. As he came up she recognized the pit boss' boy.

"Ma sent me to tell you to do somethin' quick. Kate an' Dilsey is out with a lot of winnin', an' they are runnin' wild. Mr. Aldrich went down with the new shift. Pa told him he better watch things on top, but he thought pa needed help. Now they are goin' to git hold of the shafthouse an' when Mr. Aldrich comes up with the new men either drop the cage or rock 'em."

The doctor's face had grown white as the boy talked.

"The shift will come up at 6?" she asked.

The boy nodded.

"Come into the house. You must be dried and fed. I will telephone the police, but Bess and I will get there half an hour ahead of them. Heaven knows what we will do, but we will do something or die!" she half whispered.

"Now, go, Bess!" she cried as she sprang into the buggy.

As she approached the little town she could hear a swelling din of discordant voices. She dashed through an alley and came out in the street in front of the shafthouse. The women were sweeping around the corner just below her, fifteen or twenty of them. Their tossing arms and distorted faces held her a second fascinated. Then her brown eyes brightened mischievously, and she wheeled the horse and cart directly in front of the howling crowd.

"Kate McGuire!" she called, pointing an accusing whip at her. Their momentum carried them nearly to the cart. Then, as they could not conveniently climb it and the "darlin' doctor" was a person to respect anyway, they stopped.

"What do you mean," she demanded sternly, "yelling around in this cold rain? What do you think it will do for your neuralgia? You will be crazy with it. Your cheek is all swelled up now, and your eye looks as though you had broken a blood vessel. I knew a woman once"—her voice grew deeply impressive—"whose eye burst, and she didn't expose herself the way you are doing either. And you, too, Dilsey, just nicely over the smallpox—do you know what you will have? You will have a real sore eye!"

She fairly buried the word at her, and Dilsey received it with a moan of terror.

"Holy mother, doctor!" she wailed. "Do it fatal?"

Kate had shut her mouth and was whining softly, cuddling her face in her damp shawl. She turned reproachfully to the women behind her.

"The doctor's right. This do be a sorry night for poor winnin' cratures to be out in, an' ye ought to be ashamed. Me head's crazy already wid the pain."

She came close to the buggy.

"Doctor, dear, do be givin' me somethin'!" she entreated.

"How many of you have vaccinations that you'll be taking cold in? And you, Jerusha—I thought you told me you couldn't speak a loud word?"

"No more I can," croaked Jerusha faintly.

"Go home, every one of you!" she wailed impudently. "You ought to be ashamed, running around like a lot of lunatics. I'll come around presently and give you something for that neuralgia, Kate, and you dose, too, Dilsey."

Five minutes later there wasn't a woman in sight save the doctor.

She drove the trembling horse into one of the sheds.

"Poor old girl!" she said, loosening up the harness. "I nearly killed you, didn't I?"

There was a sound of hurrying feet, and Mr. Aldrich came in breathlessly.

"Are you safe?" he cried.

She gave him one quick glance, her white chin and red lips set with becoming gravity.

"I think I am," she replied, with a mild note of inquiry. "Do you feel dangerous?"

He strode up to her and looked down into the provoking face.

"A man who faints when he is vaccinated is a fit subject to be saved from a mob of women, isn't he?" he questioned. "Don't think I don't realize how serious it was. I know you probably saved me from a very unpleasant death, but I wish you hadn't."

He searched her face an instant, then suddenly drew her to him and kissed almost roughly the derisive dimple that was flaunting at him.

"I have been tempted a hundred times," he said defiantly.

"And you were too—too stupid to—or fall!"

The Division of Time.

The division of time into hours was practiced among the Babylonians from remote antiquity, but it was Hipparchus, the philosopher, who introduced the Babylonian hour into Europe. The sexagesimal system of notation was chosen by that ancient people because there is no number having so many divisions as sixty. The Babylonians divided the daily journey of the sun, the ruler of the day, into twenty-four parangs. Each parang or hour was subdivided into sixty minutes and that again into sixty seconds. They compared the progress made by the sun during one hour at the time of the equinox to the progress made by a good walker in the same period of time, both covering one parang, and the course of the sun during the full equinoctial day was fixed at twenty-four parangs.

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